
Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) Equity & Environmental Justice Working Group- Financing Adaptation and Resilience Working Group MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: August 24, 2020

Meeting Time: 9:30 - 10:30am

Meeting Recording:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/6ZEsL53C2WRJbqPOuB_7e5l-AKnDX6a82ihPrqVcyE7g1MvxDsgE6JqJYYGX2SJr?startTime=1598275988000

ATTENDANCE

Working Group Member EEJ	Title	Organization	Present
Mark Mitchell Chair EEJ Adaptation	Professor	George Mason University	x
Marianne Engelman-Lado EEJ Co-chair	Professor	Yale University	x
Kathleen Fay	Director of Community Sustainability	Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven; member of the City of New Haven's	x
Lynne Bonnett	President	Greater New Haven Green Fund	x
Lee Cruz EEJ Co-Chair	Director of Community Outreach	Community Foundation for a Greater New Haven	x
Michael Piscitelli	Interim Economic Development Administrator	City of New Haven	x

Leticia Colon de Mejias	Executive Director	Energy Efficiency Solutions	x
Denise Savageau	Chair	CT Council on Soil & Water Conservation	x
Working Group Member Financing	Title	Organization	Present
Rebecca French, Co-Chair Financing	Director of the Office of Climate Planning	CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection	x
Andrew Mais, Co-Chair Financing	Commissioner	CT Insurance Department	x
Deputy Commissioner Alexandra Daum, Co-Chair	Commissioner	CT Dept. of Economic and Community Development	x
Bryan Garcia, Co-Chair	President and CEO	CT Green Bank	x
Joseph MacDougald	Executive Director	UConn Law School Center for Energy and Environment	x
David Sutherland	Director of Government Relations	The Nature Conservancy	x
Wayne Cobleigh	Vice President	GZA	x
Kathy Dorgan	Principal	Dorgan Architecture & Planning	x
Dean Audet	Senior Water Resources Engineer	Fuss & O'Neill	x
Robert LaFrance	Policy Director	Audubon CT	x
Adrienne Farrar Houël	President and CEO	Greater Bridgeport Community Enterprises	x
Jennifer O'Brien	Program Director	Community Foundation for Eastern CT	x
George Bradner	Director, Property and Casualty filings	CT Insurance Department	x
John Truscinski	Director of Resilience Planning	CT Institute for Resilience and Climate	x

Associated Staff & GC3 WG Members	Title	Organization	Present
Edith Pestana	Administrator	CT DEEP: EJ Program	x

Mary-beth Hart	Environmental Analyst	CT DEEP	x
James Albis	Senior Advisor to Commissioner Katie Dykes	DEEP	x
Members of the Public			
Diane Hoffman	Resident	Hamden, CT	x
Amy Patterson	Executive Director	Ct Land Conservation Council	x
Caitlin Daddona	Intern	UConn Office of Sustainability	x
Connor Rockett	Forest Policy Fellow	New England Forestry Foundation	x

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome and Announcements - *Mark Mitchell*

Asked that comments be written into the chat and there will be additional opportunity to provide written comments on the reports.

Engleman-Lado – reiterate ability to provide written comments and comments during the public comment period

- *Reminder that EEJ has its own report to write where they can lift up something we think is very important*
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Agenda Item(s)

1. Financing Adaptation and Resilience Working Group Presentation

- Rebecca French presenting. Introduces Financing WG co-chairs and states she wrote paper on this topic in 2016 with another WG member, Wayne Cobleigh.
- Presentation starts
- Presentation does not cover all material in the report, but provides snippets from each of the sections. Encourages group to read the full report for a list of all recommendations.
- Financing charge from EO3 for proposals for funding and financing mechanisms for recommendations in the statewide Adaptation and Resilience Plan
- Overview of report's 'Findings' section. Includes barriers to financing and funding from a review of literature, focus on insurance, nature-based solutions integrating equity, engaging foundations and equity lens.
- Finding – 2018 study showed disaster recovery funds increasing the racial wealth gap of whites and people of color. Whites accumulate more wealth and residents of color less. Important for CT because disaster recovery funds largest source of resilience funding in state and do not want to perpetuate this in the state as we continue to have natural disasters and receive federal aid.
- Table of Existing funding and financing resources as a reference for anyone who wants to locate funding sources. Includes a high-level look at equity in these existing programs. Example of NFWF resilient communities grant with \$3million available in 2020.
- Recommendations
- Strategy 1 – build governance structure to allow for effective and efficient financing and funding.
 - Example recommendation – state funded and initiated infrastructure and building projects should meet climate adaptation and resilience standards. For each recommendation provide + - or 0 for equity considerations with comments. Positive rating for this recommendation
- Strategy 2: Generate revenue to pay for resilience projects because savings is from avoided loss and difficult to turn that savings into a revenue stream like we can do for energy improvements.
 - Example recommendation – establish a resilience fee. Neutral for equity because it can be designed to be more or less equitable. Important to ensure those paying the

- Strategy 3: Supply grants and loans to fund resilience projects and programs
 - Example recommendation – provide state general obligation bond funding for resilience and adaptation programs and projects. GO bonds fund things like transportation and wastewater treatment plant infrastructure. Equity impact is positive because GO bonds are incremental cost to any individual since they are backed by state taxpayer dollars and you can prioritize project to vulnerable communities without them paying for the entire cost.
- Strategy 4: tax credit incentives – exploring integrating resilience into tax credit programs.
- Strategy 5: Engage foundation and philanthropic community as a funding and financing partner. Philanthropic community well-suited to working environmental justice and equity issues.
- All actions under Strategy 5
 - Convene Connecticut's Foundation community
 - Assess Connecticut's capacity for implementation and advancement of climate change initiatives at the community level
 - Launch a statewide campaign for Just Climate Change Engagement.
 - Initiate a pool of foundation and tax credit dollars to provide matching grants and funding for projects.
 - Undertake a strategic initiative to increase available funding for Just Climate Change engagement
 - Continue disaster philanthropy with an eye towards long-term resilience.
 - Increase individual and corporate giving
 - Promote the CT state Neighborhood Investment Act Tax Credits for Resilience.
 - Facilitate the relationship with national foundations.
- Bryan Garcia presenting Equity Lens process
 - Goal of applying equity lens to climate funding and financing mechanisms through an ongoing public participation process
 - Starting with a federal criteria from the FEMA BRIC program community lifelines and community support and recovery functions, then apply public participation with communities looking at specific projects and circumstances and then revise the equity criteria to find improvements to financing and funding mechanisms to ensure sufficiency and availability by vulnerable communities.
 - Examples of mechanism – Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds, FEMA BRIC, Public Private Partnerships.
 - Apply the community lifelines criteria – lifelines allow continuous operation of government and business function and is essential to human life and safety.
 - We are trying to take federal criteria and make them relevant to our EJ communities in Connecticut to drive investment in vulnerable communities.
 - Looking for assistance from the EEJ group on identifying who should be part of the public participation process in refining these criteria, how to do it, and get your

Presentation Concludes

Agenda Item: Feedback and Discussion

- Mark Mitchell:
 - Clear group serious about taking EJ into account.
 - Limit to how much we can do without funding for training communities without giving them the overall picture and helping them to understand.
 - Community engagement can do prioritization and really key on the state and local level.
 - Hear voices of people who are most impacted and have them help to prioritize because not all of this money is available tomorrow
- Comment from Denise – problem is all the time is spent on preparedness and mitigation is last in line.
 - Rebecca responds – agrees with statement from Denise. Focused on FEMA BRIC program because it is a pre-disaster mitigation program with focus on resilient communities for the first time. \$500 million in FY20 as opposed to \$25 million in recent years.
 - Bryan responds – in equity lens Adrienne made the case community planning and capacity building recovery support function should be front and center.
- Comments in Chat from Truscinski and Bradner on connecting community lifelines and mitigation to socially vulnerable and underserved communities.
- Comment from Denise in Chat – post-Sandy survey about decision to evacuate or not
 - Rebecca responds knowing the study that people did not evacuate because they were worried about the contents of their refrigerator spoiling. Connection between disaster and food insecurity.
- Comment from Marianne in Chat – priorities for 2020 vs. 2021 from this group.
 - Rebecca responds – legislative priorities are in 2021, whereas the governance ideas can be moved earlier because they are about the way we work with resources we already have. The report provides a list of options for funding and financing and that work is done with this report so in 2021 Financing group has not discussed what we might do next. We might take a closer look at implementation.
 - Mark Mitchell responds with follow up question – Can we let people know how to respond in the short term if something is moving forward and how do we support it?
 - Bryan Garcia responds we could add information to the existing resources data table on when funding sources are available
 - Wayne Cobleigh responds – many are federal grants are they do have a seasonality for applications we could add to the table. Suggest process for FEMA BRIC program to bring people together.
 - Rebecca French responds – foundations could help with funding groups to put together and application because the federal government does not

- David Sutherland responds – were preliminary meetings earlier in the summer on how to work on COVID recovery funding opportunities, but we might be able to look at these upcoming opportunities too.
- Robert Lafrance – also working on issues at the federal level too on COVID recovery. Heard from municipalities about needs and EJ angle. Two issues for municipalities is having people to write the grants, and second to have resources for pre-engineering analysis of projects we might want to do. Opportunity for firms to work with other groups on EJ and bring them together. It is a major deficiency right now.
- Mark Mitchell responds – He is interested and Adrienne too.
- Lee Cruz comment (verbal only)
 - Looking at this issue through disaster funding lens is the way to go because it is cross-sectional
 - From the top has to be vision and leadership and offer of incentives and willingness to work
 - We are living through a COVID disaster and a long-term disaster of climate change
 - Community foundation engagement comments:
 - Community Foundation in Hartford New Haven and Fairfield County are the three largest community Foundation's in the State of Connecticut we turned on, you know, all our charm and raised a total combined of \$12.6 million.
 - The point about that is we are not the source in any way shape of the big bucks, where we are, I think, is a place to think about leveraging
 - Foundations a place to think about influence. Donors are some of the most influential people in the state they are typically highly educated and as a barometer of working on issues that really need attention.
 - Donors tend to lean toward being liberal and I only use that to mean that they, they tend to be people you don't have to convince them that climate change is real. So these are the factors, our donors and their ability to influence in to support and to be advocates.
 - The money we give goes through a decision making process that has to have a lens of environmental justice and right now what we're working on New Haven, Hartford, and Fairfield County is diversity, equity, and inclusion in terms of the economy in that fault has to be the lens of environmental justice and the idea that all of our funding is funding to deal with climate change, as it relates to everything from food security to health individual house and community health to housing or to education. And so that's where conversations are needed. I believe.
 - **Governor needs to call in the Presidents of the 5 or 6 largest community foundations and have a conversation with them once he receives this report if we are to move this conversation forward with them.**

- All community foundations have an evaluation process that is based in public participation, and we can bring our influence towards democratizing this process and towards the needs of the poorest in our state and influence the leverage points created by the dollars raised by the foundations, which is worth more than the actual dollars available.
- Rebecca French responds to comment in chat about why report focused on adaptation and resilience and not reduction of carbon emissions. This is because of the Executive Order 3 requesting proposals under that the Adaptation and Resilience Plan. There are financing and funding needs for reducing carbon emissions as well. Something we can bring to the Chair's attention if needed.
- Mark Mitchell asks if any public comments
 - No public comments
- Lynne Bonnett comments – 1) Vulnerable communities subsidizing state with the benefit charge on their utility bills but no mention of how we are going to fund vulnerable communities; 2) how are general obligation bonds targeting vulnerable communities going to be sold to investors?
 - Rebecca responds – Financing group talked to someone from the Office of the Treasury and we learned investors want to know the state is staying ahead on climate issues and that might keep our bond ratings higher and keep investors interested in keeping their money in the state. Also we do already have programs backed by GO bonds that are targeted at low income communities like the Urban Act and the Clean Water Fund CSOs.
 - Bryan responds – For bonds it has to start with a policy that vulnerable communities are a priority. Connecticut is beyond parity for solar investments in low income communities because we made it a priority to make investments there. Equity lens can help in prioritizing funds like they have not been previously prioritized.
- Mark Mitchell – Additional comments can be emailed to him.

COMMENTS IN CHAT

Denise Savageau

01:14:58

The problem with emergency preparedness is we spend all the time on preparedness and look at mitigation last. We need to implement mitigation before, not after a disaster.

John Truscinski

01:18:09

I think the idea here is to look at the long term climate driven risks to "community lifelines" in socially vulnerable communities, and prioritize long term investment in mitigating the need for emergency management.

BradnerG

01:18:48

The goal is to mirror the federal process to build a means to finance mitigation efforts and focus on

Denise Savageau

01:19:08

UConn Seigrant was involved in a social science analysis after Sandy. Although not focused on EEJ, could certainly look at that process the engaged numerous research institutions. For example, they did a lot of research on why folk don't evacuate during a disaster.

Marianne Engelman-Lado

01:20:21

Can you walk through your thinking about what part of this process and what recommendations you hope to move in 2020 (this fall) and what you hope to move in 2021? For example, the pilot process might lead to a longer and funded process in 2021, with funding for community partners involved in the process?

pestanae

01:21:26

Have you given any thought to offering training to communities ?

Marianne Engelman-Lado

01:22:05

Given the minuscule funding that goes to EJ communities and EJ community groups from philanthropic sources, any approach to philanthropy should ensure that funding doesn't divert funding that would go to EJ groups and/or that the outreach funds go to EJ groups to lead the outreach.

Marianne Engelman-Lado

01:23:53

I also want to thank FAR for taking seriously the need to assess each recommendation through an equity lens, which is a good start.

pestanae

01:24:19

I agree with Marianne that the outreach should be done in partnership with EJ communities leaders.

Adrienne Houël

01:24:20

I'm on but I' at work and I'm using my phone for audio and not able to chime in for some reason....

Leticia Colon de Mejias

01:24:59

How do you intend to connect with these EJ communities? They have a lack of technology., and a lack of access to information on climate and energy topics. There has been no outward facing materials that are easily understood. These people have serious energy burdens and other barriers.

Kathy Fay

01:25:29

Was it a choice of this committee to focus on adaptation not mitigation, or was that how the process was set up?

pestanae

01:26:27

James and Mary beth- would you please check to see if Adrienne is muted ? thank you!

lynne bonnett

01:27:57

c1) can we decouple taxpayer responsibility from insuring high risk properties due to climate change or at least limit the risk that the public has to bail out this type of insurance coverage? 3) re general obligation bonds; are investors going to be put off by investing in vulnerable communities? How will the investment be structured to prioritize EJ communities; please give example. 3) why isn't the historical subsidization that EJ communities have paid into efficiency programs and renewable programs for the wealthier communities through the electrical company charge on our electrical bill? 4) why can't we couple renewable generation (solar) with conversion from oil to electric heat pumps in low income communities to avoid overstressing the grid, lower energy burden of LMI residents, provide cooling for LMI residents in the face of coming temperature rise, transitioning away from fossile fuel source for heating and cooling?

Marianne Engelmann-Lado

01:28:28

If these big picture proposals are to move out in 2020, what would be the timing of the pilot community engagement and then the follow up rollout, even for prioritization?

Denise Savageau

01:29:12

One of the challenges following a disaster and even in mitigation before is gentrifications of neighborhoods. Has any thought been given to moving vulnerable communities out of coastal flood plains but not have their neighborhood be replaced by those who can afford to build in flood plain. Eg conversion to natural park.? How do we help towns' do this?

Denise Savageau

01:31:22

Example would be the USDA NRCS EWP program in West Haven.

Kathy Fay

01:34:51

On anything related to financing larger construction projects (especially in OZ and other EEJ communities) can we require that they be designed and built to be able to immediately convert to emergency community shelters: electric generation, capacity for cold food storage and potable water, microgridding, etc.

Adrienne Houël

01:36:23

I have two comments: COGs can be VERY helpful in writing and managing grants, and foundations can finance training and help convenings

Adrienne Houël

WE need to use community foundations to leverage to national foundations

kathy dorgan

01:36:51

Community Design Centers are the public interest practice of architecture, planning and design. Connecticut needs a strong resource in this area.

Denise Savageau

01:36:56

I do want to comment on the loan program the CT instituted after Sandy. Basically this was not available to folks whose home was destroyed because they had not equity until house was restored. Can't restore until house is elevated.

Denise Savageau

01:39:04

We also need to determine if homes should be elevated or moved out. Just because they can meet BFE criteria does not mean they should be elevated. We need to do an assessment that looks at useful life of structure. We do this for infrastructure like bridges and roads, but it is very different for residential.

Diane Hoffman

01:41:37

very informative. Thankyou!

Marianne Engelman-Lado

01:42:19

Thanks to everyone!

Marianne Engelman-Lado

01:43:25

I have to jump to another call. Sorry to leave this good discussion.

Denise Savageau

01:43:55

I worked in the town EOC during both Irene and Sandy so understand the emergency response and challenges during emergency. Also was in charge of the HMGP in our community. And also worked in the land use department. So understand the interaction. Happy to share that experience with this group.

Joe MacDougald

01:44:05

Thank you! Signing off.

Michael Piscitelli

01:44:46

Financing Adaptation and Resilience
Thanks everyone; very important topic here in New Haven.

August 24, 2020

Denise Savageau

01:45:33

CT has Flood and Erosion bond legislation that should be looked at.

Kathy Fay

01:45:51

No more raiding of energy efficiency funds would help make us a lot more credible in eyes of out of state investors - most of us know that..